

When All Is Said and Done

Revelation 16

Now that God has caught us up with the relevant background -- the two witnesses, the faithful 144,000, the beasts, the harvests, the woman and her persecution by the dragon, the little book and Satan getting cast out of heaven -- we're better prepared to appreciate what the Lord has done over many millennia to give mankind opportunity to repent from his stubborn adherence to following the devil's advice. The seventh trumpet has sounded; it is the final woe. It is God's wrath.

Then I heard a loud voice from the temple saying to the seven angels, "Go and pour out the bowls of the wrath of God on the earth." So the first went and poured out his bowl upon the earth, and a foul and loathsome sore came upon the men who had the mark of the beast and those who worshiped his image. Each of these bowls are significant in three ways -- what they are, who they target and their inherent message.

This first bowl produces a "foul and loathsome sore". The word for "foul" is equally "evil" or "pernicious". "Loathsome" is a word in Greek that involves hard labor and peril. So these pus oozing sores will not go away and

if not attended to continually pose a serious threat to the victim.

The targets of this bowl are two -- those who took the mark and those who worship the image. With this bowl, God goes right to the heart of the satanic rebellion. He afflicts the worshippers. Those who have taken the mark have in effect sold their souls to Satan to live comfortably in his system and those who actually worship the image of the beast are diseased in their minds. The message is not complicated; they are themselves foul and loathsome sores upon the earth and their condition will only get worse.

Then the second angel poured out his bowl on the sea, and it became blood as of a dead man; and every living creature in the sea died. The judgment is dead man's blood. The target is the sea which represents the gentile nations. The message is simple. "You're all dead men. There's no life in you."

Then the third angel poured out his bowl on the rivers and springs of water, and they became blood. And I heard the angel of the waters saying:

"You are righteous, O Lord, The One who is and who was and who is to be, Because You have judged these things.

For they have shed the blood of saints and prophets,

And You have given them blood to drink.

For it is their just due."

And I heard another from the altar saying, "Even so, Lord God Almighty, true and righteous are Your judgments." The judgment is blood. The target is all drinkable water and the message is given by the angel of the waters. Another angel from the altar echoes that this action is 'true to its core' and absolutely just. This is likely the answer to those saints, under the altar in heaven, who in Revelation six cried out to the Lord, "How long, O Lord, holy and true, until You judge and avenge our blood on those who dwell on the earth?" To these saints it was said to wait a little while longer until the number of those who could be saved was complete and at this point, that is indeed the case. The message to the world of sinful man is simple - they have caused God's earth to drink the blood of his own people and thus they shall drink blood as well.

Then the fourth angel poured out his bowl on the sun, and power was given to him to scorch men with fire. And men were scorched with great heat, and they blasphemed the name of God who has power over these plagues; and they did not repent and give Him glory. Isaiah could very well have been referring to this when he prophesied,

There will be on every high mountain

And on every high hill

Rivers and streams of waters, (that is, waters of affliction as in

Isa 30:20 or bowls of wrath)

In the day of the great slaughter, (Gog/Magog and/or Armageddon)

When the towers fall. (World Trade towers?)

Moreover the light of the moon will be as the light of the sun,

And the light of the sun will be sevenfold,

As the light of seven days, In the day that the LORD binds up the bruise of His people

And heals the stroke of their wound. (Isa 30:25,26)

The judgment is intense heat from the sun. The target is all unsaved mankind. The message is simple -- here's a small sample of the fiery hell to which you are headed. And, as we would expect from such a group which is so deceived and dedicated to Satan and at such enmity against God, they continue to blaspheme the name of the Lord.

Then the fifth angel poured out his bowl on the throne of the beast, and his kingdom became full of darkness; and they gnawed their tongues because of the pain. They blasphemed the God of heaven because of their pains and their sores, and did not repent of their deeds. The judgment is deep darkness and pain (or a painful sense of loss, i.e. poverty). The target is the throne of the beast and consequently, his kingdom. The message is simple -- here's another sample of the hell to which you're headed.

Jesus referred to hell as “outer darkness” in Mat 25:30. The apostle Peter wrote: *For if God did not spare the angels who sinned, but cast them **down to hell** and delivered them into **chains of darkness**, to be reserved for judgment; ... then the Lord knows how to ... reserve the unjust under punishment for the day of judgment, and especially those who walk according to the flesh in the lust of uncleanness and despise authority. They are presumptuous, self-willed. They are not afraid to speak evil of dignitaries, whereas angels, who are greater in power and might, do not bring a reviling accusation against them before the Lord.* (2 Pet 2:4,9-11)

Hell is hot. Hell is dark. Hell is full of an irrepressible sense of pain and loss. As we’ve written previously, the beast may come to power by being elected, but just as with Hitler, he will soon take and expand absolute control, creating a kingdom with himself upon a throne.

The very first recorded act of God on this planet dealt with darkness and light. Much like that first chaotic void, this time of tribulation will be utterly dark. As with the darkness Moses witnessed in Egypt, it may be thick enough to feel.

The psalmist prophesied concerning the wicked, perhaps of these days, *They do not know, nor do they understand; they walk about in darkness; all the*

foundations of the earth are unstable. (Psa 82:5)

Isaiah the prophet spoke of this when he said, *To the law and to the testimony! If they do not speak according to this word, it is because there is no light in them.*

They will pass through it hard-pressed and hungry; and it shall happen, when they are hungry, that they will be enraged and curse their king and their God, and look upward. Then they will look to the earth, and see trouble (tribulation) and darkness, gloom of anguish; and they will be driven into darkness. (Isa 8:20-22)

And he added,
For behold, the darkness shall cover the earth,

And deep darkness the (unrepentant) people;

But the LORD will arise over you, (His remnant)

And His glory will be seen upon you. (Isa 60:2)

Then the sixth angel poured out his bowl on the great river Euphrates, and its water was dried up, so that the way of the kings from the east might be prepared. And I saw three unclean spirits like frogs coming out of the mouth of the dragon, out of the mouth of the beast, and out of the mouth of the false prophet. For they are spirits of demons, performing signs, which go out to the kings of the earth and of the whole world, to gather them to the battle of that great day of God Almighty. The judgment is interesting in that it is not an immediate cataclysm.

Rather, God makes the trek westward easier for the armies of the east. Perhaps they will come initially to fight against the beast but ultimately they will try to oppose the return of Christ. The psalmist prophesied of this when he wrote,

*Why do the nations rage,
And the people plot a vain thing?*

The kings of the earth set themselves,

And the rulers take counsel together,

Against the LORD and against His Anointed, saying,

“Let us break Their bonds in pieces

And cast away Their cords from us.”

He who sits in the heavens shall laugh;

The Lord shall hold them in derision.

Then He shall speak to them in His wrath,

And distress them in His deep displeasure:

The unholy ‘trinity’ has frogs come out of their mouths which, we are told, are demonic spirits that perform miraculous parlor tricks and thus endeavor to gather the leaders of both carnal Israel (the earth) and the gentile nations (the whole world). This judgment is the preparation for the most horrific battle ever to take place on planet Babylon – the Battle of Armageddon. The target is the Euphrates river which is the eastern boundary of the land given to Abram by God (Gen 15:18). It

is the river that ran through the ancient city of Babylon, giving it life. It is the place where the four terrible angels of Revelation nine were unleashed to kill a third of mankind with a demonically influenced army. That unleashing, the result of the sixth trumpet, may be synchronous with this event but I’m inclined to view them as separate. The message is simple – get ready to fight.

“Behold, I am coming as a thief. Blessed is he who watches, and keeps his garments, lest he walk naked and they see his shame.”

This short comment is injected for the sake of the elect, the saved remnant of Israel, who observing these dire events are likely going to need to be encouraged that the end is very near. Note that the Lord says, “keeps his garments” which clearly speaks of their ‘robes of righteousness’ as seen in other parts of this book (see also Gal 3:27). That is, they are already saved and righteous – God says, hold on to your faith.

And they gathered them together to the place called in Hebrew, Armageddon. This likely refers to the area around the city of Megiddo called the valley of Esdraelon. Today, Megiddo is a hill or mound made of 26 layers of the ruins of ancient cities in a strategic location at the head of a pass through the Carmel Ridge, which overlooks the Valley of Jezreel from the west. Because of its strategic location at the

crossroads of several major routes, Megiddo and its environs have witnessed several major battles throughout history.

“During the past 4000 years, at least 34 bloody conflicts have already been fought at the ancient site of Megiddo and adjacent areas of the Jezreel Valley. Egyptians, Canaanites, Israelites, Midianites, Amalekites, Philistines, Hasmonaeans, Greeks, Romans, Muslims, Crusaders, Mamlukes, Mongols, French, Ottomans, British, Australians, Germans, Arabs and Israelis have all fought and died here. The names of the warring generals and leaders reverberate throughout history: Thutmose III, Deborah and Barak, Sisera, Gideon, Saul and Jonathan, Shishak, Jehu, Joram, Jezebel, Josiah, Antiochus, Ptolemy, Vespasian, Saladin, Napoleon, and Allenby, to name but a few of the most famous. Throughout history Megiddo and the Jezreel Valley have been Ground Zero for battles that determined the very course of civilization.” – Eric H. Cline, Assistant Professor of Archaeology and Ancient History, The George Washington University

Then the seventh angel poured out his bowl into the air, and a loud voice came out of the temple of heaven, from the throne, saying, “It is done!” And there were noises and thunderings and lightnings; and there was a great earthquake, such a mighty and

great earthquake as had not occurred since men were on the earth. As this last bowl of wrath is poured out, a mighty voice from the holy of holies thunders the same thing Jesus whispered (or so I imagine) from the cross, “It is done!” For that reason, I think it is Jesus again who says this. What will follow is probably the result of this thundering voice. An earthquake shook Jerusalem the first time it was spoken as well. However, this quake is greater than anything that ever shook the earth since the creation of man.

Now the great city was divided into three parts, and the cities of the nations fell. And great Babylon was remembered before God, to give her the cup of the wine of the fierceness of His wrath. The great city is Jerusalem and is distinguished from the cities of the gentiles. The former is divided, the latter are decimated. Great Babylon is planet Babylon for the world is now entirely the congregation of the rebellious against God (save the Hebrew remnant). We’ll talk more about the cup ‘she’ holds next chapter.

Then every island fled away, and the mountains were not found. And great hail from heaven fell upon men, each hailstone about the weight of a talent. Men blasphemed God because of the plague of the hail, since that plague was exceedingly great. The earthquake is so strong that it literally levels the geography of the

planet possibly by massive shifts in the tectonic plates. This is accompanied by ice balls weighing about 75 lbs.

The judgment is a shaking and leveling of every exalted place together with the destruction of frozen boulders of ice-water. The target is Babylon. The message is simple – it is done!

Throughout scripture, we find God dealing with erring mankind, particularly Israel, sometimes gently and sometimes with rigor, but always with mercy and ultimately with forgiveness. That’s because God is gracious. He has reached out to man for so long that it is difficult to see Him dealing with the planet as He does in this chapter. But, God is also just. At this point, each of the messages given by way of the judgments are no longer spoken to those who may be saved somehow. The messages are simple and are given as a witness to the entire cosmos, to all of creation. God is Who He is. All who could be saved have been; that is part of what Jesus meant when at the conclusion He thundered for a second time, “It is done!”